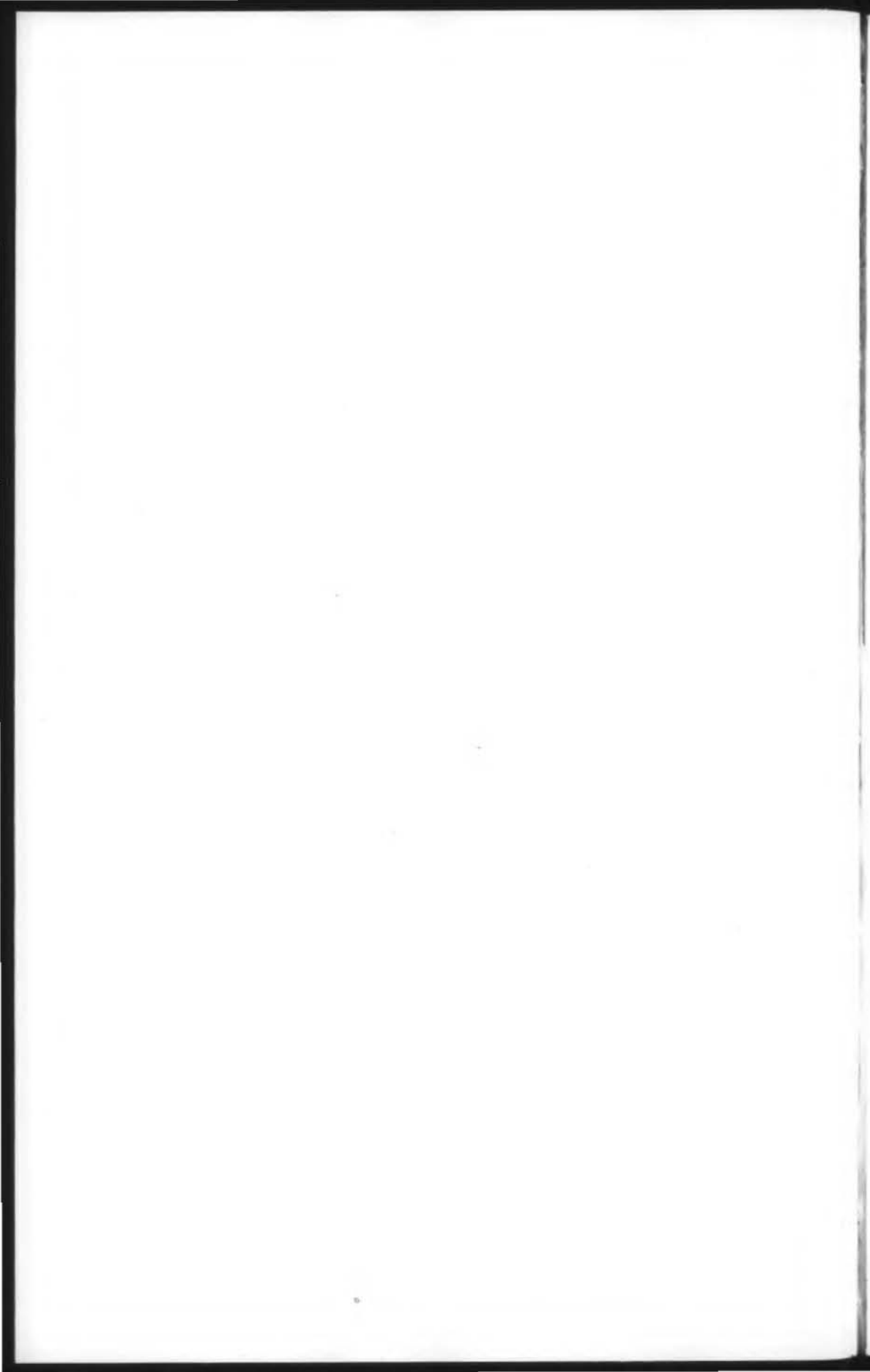




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FLORIDA.

SAMUEL A. DRAKE.

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FLORIDA:

ITS HISTORY, CONDITION, AND RESOURCES.

BY

SAMUEL A. DRAKE.

!!!

WITH MAP.

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FLORIDA.

FLORIDA, the most southern of the United States of America, is a large promontory extending southwards into the Atlantic ocean, its southern and western coasts forming in part the northern and eastern shore line of the Gulf of Mexico.

The name of Florida was in the 16th and early part of the 17th century indefinitely applied to the territory now lying south of Virginia. By its charter the southern boundary of Carolina was fixed at the 29th parallel, thus including about one half of the present State of Florida. In 1738 the stipulated northern boundary of Florida was a line drawn due west from the mouth of the St John's River (called by the Spaniards San Juan) to the little river Vasisa, cutting off all upper or continental Florida. At the time of its cession by Spain to Great Britain in 1763, the territory of Florida extended as far west as the Mississippi river, including portions of the present States of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. The present boundaries are comprised between $24^{\circ} 30'$ and 31° N. lat., and 80° and $87^{\circ} 45'$ W. long.

Florida makes the southern boundary of the State of Georgia, and in part that of Alabama, from which it is separated on the north-west by the river Perdido. The Atlantic washes its eastern, and the Gulf of Mexico its southern and western coasts, constituting a sea-board of more than 1000 miles. On the south-east it is separated from the Bahamas by the Straits of Florida. It points towards Cuba on the south, Havana being about 110 miles

from Key West. Its entire length from Perdido river to Cape Sable is about 700 miles, its mean breadth 90 miles. The estimated area of Florida is 59,268 square miles, or 37,931,520 acres, of which 2,373,541 acres were in 1870 included in farms. The population in 1870 was 187,748.

The peninsula proper terminates on the south in Cape Sable; but a remarkable chain of rocky islets, called the Florida Keys, begins at Cape Florida on the eastern shore, extends south-westerly nearly 200 miles in a direction generally conforming with that of the coast, and ends in the cluster of sand-heaped rocks known as the Tortugas, from the great number of turtle formerly frequenting them. South of the bank on which these Keys rise, and separated from them by a navigable channel, is the long, narrow, and dangerous coral ridge known as the Florida Reef. This group of keys and reefs is washed on the south by the constant current of the Gulf Stream. The most important of the keys is Key West, a nautical corruption of *Cayo Hueso* or Bone Key, which name originated in the great number of bones found on the island by the Spaniards, supposed to be those of the aboriginal inhabitants. The island was long the haunt of smugglers and pirates, but is now a busy and thriving place, and one of the most important naval stations possessed by the United States, on account of its commanding situation at the entrance of the most frequented passage into the Gulf of Mexico, as well as its nearness to Havana, Kingston, and other important ports of the West Indies, belonging to European powers.

The Gulf coast of the State is intersected by numerous bays, among which are Pensacola, Choctawhatchee, St Andrew's, Appalachicola, Appalachee, Tampa, Charlotte, Ponce de Leon or Chatham, and Florida Bays, the last lying between the Keys and mainland. The chief rivers are St John's, navigable about 100 miles for vessels of moderate draught, and emptying into the Atlantic after a northerly course of 300 miles; Indian River, a long narrow lagoon on the eastern coast, which it is proposed to unite by a canal with the St John's; the Suwanee and Ockloconee, which rise in Georgia and flow into the Gulf of Mexico; the Appalachicola, formed by the Chattahoochee and Flint

rivers, and emptying into the bay of the same name ; Choctawhatchee, Escambia, and Perdido, also flowing into the Gulf. The St Mary's makes for some distance the northern boundary of the State. Florida has also numerous lakes, some of which are navigable. Lake Okeechobee, in the Everglades, is about 40 miles long and 30 broad.

Surface and Soil.—The surface is generally level, the greatest elevation being not more than 300 feet above the sea, although old maps represent it as mountainous. The most remarkable feature is the immense tract of marsh filled with islands in the southern part of the state, called the Everglades, and by the Indians "grass-water." Between the Suwanee and Chattahoochee the country is hilly ; the western portion of the State is level. De Bow designates the lands as high-hummock, low-hummock, swamp, savanna, and pine. The soil is generally sandy, except in the hummocks, where it is intermixed with clay. These hummocks vary in extent from a few to thousands of acres, and are found in all parts of the State. They are usually covered with a heavy growth of red, live, and water oak, magnolia, pine, and dogwood. When cleared they afford desirable openings for cultivation. The savannas are rich alluvions on the margins of streams or lying in detached tracts, yielding largely, but requiring ditching and dyking in ordinary seasons. In the "barrens," as the pine forests are called, the soil is very poor, and thickly overgrown with pine and cypress. The district comprised in the Everglades is impassable during the rainy season, from July to October. It is about 60 miles long by 60 broad, covering most of the territory south of Lake Okeechobee, or Big-water. The islands with which this vast swamp or lake is studded vary from one-fourth of an acre to hundreds of acres in extent. They are generally covered with dense thickets of shrubbery or vines, occasionally with lofty pines and palmettos. The water is from 1 to 6 feet deep, the bottom being covered with a growth of rank grass. The vegetable deposit of the Everglades is considered well adapted to the cultivation of the banana and plantain. Another remarkable feature of Florida are the subterranean streams which undermine the rotten limestone formation,

creating numerous cavities in the ground called "sinks." These are inverted conical hollows, or tunnels, varying in extent from a few yards to several acres, at the bottom of which running water often appears.

A most remarkable spring, situated 12 miles from Tallahassee, has been sounded with 250 fathoms of line before finding bottom. The outflow forms a beautiful lake, transparent and cold as ice even in the hottest weather. The great sink of Alachua county is a subterranean passage by which the waters of the Alachua savanna are supposed to discharge themselves into Orange Lake. In fact, the geological structure of the State is remarkable, much of its surface seeming a crust through the openings of which underground lakes and rivers force their way.

Towns and Harbours.—Notwithstanding the great extent of its sea-coast, Florida has few good harbours. Besides being a naval station, Key West is a place of considerable importance. Pensacola, Appalachicola, St Mark's, Cedar Keys, Tampa, and Charlotte on the Gulf, and Fernandina and St Augustine on the Atlantic coast, are the principal ports. Of these the harbours of Pensacola and Fernandina are the best. The cities of Florida are Jacksonville, population in 1870, 6912; Pensacola, 3347; Tallahassee, the capital, 2023; and St Augustine, 1717. Jacksonville, on St John's River, is a flourishing city, much resorted to by invalids from the northern States on account of the salubrity of its climate. Fernandina, the eastern terminus of the railway which crosses the State to Cedar Keys, on the Gulf of Mexico, has 1722 inhabitants.

Climate.—Florida, except in the vicinity of the swamps, possesses one of the most equable and agreeable climates of the continent. Occupying as it does a situation between the temperate and tropical regions, it enjoys exemption from the frosts and sudden changes of the one and the excessive heat of the other. The mercury, however, sometimes falls to the freezing point, and great damage is done to the orange plantations. The winter climate of the Gulf coast is more rigorous than that of the Atlantic. The seasons partake of the tropical character, winter being distinguishable by copious rains. Statistics show the State to

be one of the healthiest, if not the healthiest, of the United States, and its resident population is largely increased in the winter months by invalids from the north, seeking a more genial clime. Jacksonville, St Augustine, and Key West are preferred by this class of visitors, who are every year becoming more numerous. The mean winter temperature as observed at Key West was slightly less than that of Havana; while for the months from July to November it was about the same. Besides the advantage of its climate, the semi-tropical character of Florida offers a grateful and striking change of scene to the health-seeker, who leaves the bare forests and frozen streams of New England for a country teeming with luxuriant vegetation and strewn with flowers.

Products.—The productions of Florida are of an essentially tropical character: cotton, tobacco, rice, sugar-cane, arrow-root, hemp, flax, coffee, and the cocoa-nut flourish there. The climate is also favourable to the cultivation of the silk-worm and for the cochineal insect. Oranges, bananas, lemons, limes, olives, grapes, pine-apples, grow abundantly, and are of exquisite flavour. Indian corn, sweet potatoes, beans, pease, and such products of a more northern climate as Irish potatoes, barley, buckwheat, hops, &c., are also raised. The cultivation and export of oranges and other fruits have grown to be a considerable source of wealth to the State; and the manufacture of cigars, especially at Key West, is becoming an important industry. The pasturage afforded by the savannas is excellent, cattle requiring little or no attention from their owners, and no housing in winter. Game and fish abound in every part of the state. Deer, wild turkeys, partridges, geese, ducks, and other small game are in all the forests and about all the lakes, rivers, and swamps; green turtle, oysters, sheep's-head, red-fish, mullet, &c., are found on all the coasts, and freshwater fish in all the inland waters. Magnificent sponges are gathered along the reefs, and form a considerable item of trade. Cotton, rice, sugar, tobacco, lumber, fish, and fruits may be considered the most valuable products. From selected statistics, compiled by the United States Government, it appears that Florida pro-

duced in 1870—Indian corn, 2,225,056 bushels; oats, 114,204 bushels; cotton, 39,789 bales; wool, 37,562 lb; rice, 401,687 lb; cane, 553,192 galls.; Irish potatoes, 10,218 bushels; sweet potatoes, 789,456 bushels; pease and beans, 64,846 bushels; honey, 150,854 lb. Florida cotton is grown almost exclusively in the northern group of counties, but the State is capable of producing the celebrated Sea Island variety, the cultivation of which was formerly confined to a few islands on the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia. Appalachicola, formerly a considerable shipping port for cotton, has been superseded by Fernandina on the Atlantic. The crop of 1876-77 is reported at 34,303 bales, of which 11,214 was Sea Island; but it should be stated that this computation includes only shipments from Florida outports, there being no data whence to estimate accurately the quantity going to ports out of the State by rail. The same remark will apply to the quantity of wool exported.

The wool grown in Florida is long-stapled, of medium and coarse grades, little attention being as yet given to producing fine wools. In 1878 the flocks had increased to 56,500 head, yielding 200,000 lb of wool.

In 1874 Gadsden county produced on 327 acres planted 216,000 lb of tobacco, of excellent quality, valued at \$44,000. East and South Florida rely mainly upon fruit culture. Florida is said to be the only section of the Union where the orange can be grown to any extent with success. There is no fear of winter-killing south of Palatka. The quality of the fruit and the excellent condition in which it reaches the northern markets render this a most profitable crop.

The forests of Florida form no inconsiderable source of wealth. The live-oak, so valuable in shipbuilding, abounds, also the other varieties of oak, swamp cypress, hickory, pine, magnolia, dogwood, and laurel. The palma christi (castor-oil bean) becomes here a large tree; on the islands and keys boxwood, satinwood, mastic, and lignum-vitæ grow abundantly. The pine is found from Cape Sable to near Indian river. In addition to fruit-bearing species, the pimento, coffee,

pepper, clove, and other spice trees and shrubs may be successfully cultivated.

From the official sources of information it appears that in 1870 the value of the live stock on farms was \$5,212,157. The number of horses was 11,902; mules and asses, 8,835; milch cows, 61,932; draught and other cattle, 322,701; sheep, 26,509; swine, 158,908. Florida also produced 100,989 lb butter. These numbers will be largely increased by the census of 1880.

Manufactures.—These are unimportant, and are chiefly confined to flour and grist mills, lumber mills, and establishments for the manufacture of sugar and molasses, their total value in 1870 being \$4,685,403. Agriculture and commerce are the chief resources of the State,—the export of its fibrous products, cereals, fruits, fish, live-oak and other timber, giving employment to a considerable tonnage. Among the mineral productions may be named amethyst, turquoise, lapis-lazuli, ochre, coal, and iron-ore.

Trade.—The coasting trade employs many steamers and sailing craft, plying chiefly between Florida ports and Savannah, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. Pensacola and Appalachicola are naturally points of shipment for southern Alabama and south-western Georgia. The bulk of foreign merchandise reaches the State from northern ports instead of by direct importation. Key West shows much the largest tonnage of vessels entering or clearing, St John's and Fernandina following in the order named. Shipbuilding is carried on at all the ports, the vessels usually being of small burthen, for coast traffic.

Railways.—In 1876 there were only 484 miles of railway in Florida. The Jacksonville, Pensacola, and Mobile railroad extends west from Jacksonville to Chattahoochee, and is the longest in the State. Lateral lines connect this line with the Georgia system by a branch from Live Oak due north to Dupont, and with St Mark's on the Gulf by a branch south from Tallahassee. The Atlantic, Gulf, and West India Transit Company's line extends from Fernandina on the Atlantic to Cedar Keys on the Gulf, distance 155 miles. The Pensacola and Louisville road extends from Pensacola north to a junction

with the Mobile and Montgomery (Alabama) railroad, 45 miles. The St John's River line crosses from St Augustine to Tocol on the St John's, 14 miles.

Administration.—The government of Florida is similar to that of the other States of the American Union. The executive power is vested in a governor elected by the people every four years. The legislative power is represented by a senate elected for four years, and a house of representatives or assembly chosen for two years, both by popular vote. The judiciary consists of a supreme court, having one chief and two associate judges, who hold three annual sessions in Tallahassee; there are also seven circuit besides other inferior courts. Florida has two members in the national house of representatives, and has therefore (with the two senators to which each State is entitled) only four votes in the electoral college. The State is divided into 39 counties, viz., Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Brevard, Calhoun, Clay, Columbia, Dade, Duval, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Hamilton, Hernando, Hillsborough, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Leon, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Manatee, Marion, Monroe, Nassau, Orange, Polk, Putnam, St John's, Santa Rosa, Sumter, Suwanee, Taylor, Volusia, Wakulla, Walton, Washington.

Education.—Florida has neither college nor university, although an agricultural college has been incorporated; the financial condition of the State and people after the close of the great civil war has greatly retarded educational development. There is no public library of 10,000 volumes in the State. In 1876, out of a school population numbering 74,828 persons, the number actually attending public schools was only 26,052. The total expenditure for educational purposes was \$2,126,541. The slow development of education in the State may also be attributed to the numerous coloured population (91,384 in 1870) formerly held in slavery, which is wholly engaged in tilling the soil and kindred pursuits. Since the war Florida has received large accessions to its population from other States, and is undergoing changes which will, it is believed, ultimately lead to its taking a higher rank in the Union. In 1870 there were in the State 23 news-

papers and periodicals, with a total circulation of 10,545. The total number of religious organizations was 420, having 390 places of worship, and property valued at \$426,520.

History.—The history of Florida is interesting. The various attempts at colonization by Europeans of which we have authentic accounts go farther back than in any other part of the North American continent, preceding the efforts of the French in Canada, the English in Virginia, and even of the Spaniards themselves in Mexico. St Augustine is the oldest settlement founded by Europeans, not only of the United States, but of North America, and still shows traces of Spanish occupation two centuries ago. Remains of fortifications, roads, &c., are found between the Suwanee and Chattahoochee. In 1512, seven years before the invasion of Mexico by Cortes, Juan Ponce de Leon discovered the mainland of Florida on Easter Sunday, *Pascha Floridum*, the supposed derivation of the name. The discoverer landed at a place called the Bay of the Cross, took formal possession, and planted a stone cross in sign of the jurisdiction of Spain. He continued his explorations in the interior and along the coast for some months before sailing to Spain. The following year he was named governor of and received permission from Ferdinand to colonize the "Island of Florida." His efforts, however, proved unsuccessful. The place of his original landing is supposed to be a few miles north of Saint Augustine.

The next effort at colonization was the disastrous one of Pamphilo de Narvaez in 1528. He sailed from Cuba with 400 men, landed in the bay of Pensacola, and remained in the country nearly six months, when he embarked and perished in a tempest near the mouth of the Mississippi. Four survivors of this expedition succeeded, after incredible hardships, in reaching Mexico.

Hernando de Soto landed on May 30, 1539, at what is now Tampa Bay, called by the Spaniards "*Spiritu Santo*." De Soto believed Florida a new El Dorado. He had the title of *Adelantado*, or president, from the emperor, and undertook the conquest at his own expense. He passed

the first winter in the country of the Appalachians, east of Flint river. After a sanguinary conflict with the natives, who opposed his advance into the interior, and the loss of many men by disease, De Soto reached the Mississippi, where he died from fever while endeavouring to descend its banks to the mouth.

Réné Goulaine de Laudonnière, who had accompanied Jean Ribault in his expedition to Port Royal (1562), landed first at what is now St Augustine, subsequently in the river St John, called by him the "River of May," and built Fort Caroline in 1564. The colonists, who were Huguenots, were on the point of abandoning the settlement when re-enforced by Ribault; but he had scarcely anchored when a Spanish fleet under Menendez appeared. Ribault made his escape for the moment. Soon after Menendez surprised and massacred the garrison of Fort Caroline, carrying out to the letter his barbarous order to "gibbet and behead all Protestants in those regions." In endeavouring to return to Fort Caroline, Ribault and his party also fell into the hands of Menendez, and shared the fate of their companions. The French were all hanged with the inscription affixed to them—"Not as Frenchmen, but as heretics."

Aviles de Menendez, referred to as exterminating the French settlement on the St John, landed September 1565, and laid the foundation of the town, named by him St Augustine. Two years later a French expedition commanded by Dominique de Gourgues, seized two forts near the mouth of the St John, and the important one of San Mateo, and in retaliation for the cruelty of Menendez hanged all his prisoners, "not as Spaniards, but as assassins." De Gourgues's head was demanded by the Spanish king, and he was for a time compelled to live in concealment. Menendez afterwards rebuilt San Mateo.

On the 28th of May 1586 Sir Francis Drake, then returning from his memorable expedition to the West Indies, discovered a scaffold raised upon four high masts, evidently a look-out station, upon the Florida coast. No one in the fleet had any knowledge that the Spaniards

possessed a place there. Drake therefore ordered the pinnaces to make a reconnaissance. Having entered an inlet they came to the fort St Juan de Pinos, from which the garrison fled to St Augustine; and on the approach of the English they also abandoned this place, which had the appearance of a prosperous settlement, with its council-house, church, and handsome gardens. The invaders destroyed the town and meditated an attack on St Helena, twelve leagues further up the coast, but were deterred from want of a pilot to conduct them safely through the intricate and dangerous shoals. Drake pursued his voyage to Virginia, where the queen had commanded him to afford relief to Sir Walter Raleigh's newly planted colony.

The English colonists of Georgia and Carolina continued to wage war against the Spaniards in Florida. Governor Moore of South Carolina made an unsuccessful attempt on St Augustine in 1702; and General Oglethorpe of Georgia besieged it in 1740 with the same result. Nearly a hundred years later, in 1837, the U.S. engineers found balls thrown by Oglethorpe in the moat of the old Spanish fortress. In 1763 Florida was ceded to Great Britain in return for Havana, captured by Albemarle the previous year. Most of the Spaniards left the country. Vigorous efforts were made by the British Government to promote settlement by liberal grants of land to settlers. Besides a large number of emigrants who came over from Europe, promising settlements were made under the patronage of Lords Rolle and Beresford and Governor Moultrie. In addition to these many royalists emigrated thither from Georgia and Carolina, on the breaking out of hostilities between Great Britain and her American colonies. Twenty years of British possession accomplished more in settling and improving Florida than two hundred years of Spanish rule.

In 1781 Don Bernardo de Galvez, Spanish governor of Louisiana, having previously taken Mobile, besieged and captured Pensacola, thus completing the conquest of West Florida. In 1783 Florida was ceded back to Spain, when the greater part of the English population, estimated at 25,000, left the province and passed into the adjoining

states. Some unimportant military operations took place in 1814. In February 1819 a treaty for the cession of Florida to the United States was concluded at Washington, and in 1821 was reluctantly ratified by the king of Spain, thus concluding a long and tedious negotiation. Possession was taken in July by General Jackson, who had been appointed governor of the Floridas by the Government at Washington. Immigration flowed in rapidly from the southern States, the Bahamas, and even the North Atlantic States; but a great drawback to the prosperity of the newly acquired territory was found in the determined resistance of the warlike nation of Seminole Indians to the encroachments of the whites upon their hunting-grounds. A resolution on the part of the United States Government to remove these Indians led to the long and bloody struggle known as the Seminole War, in which for seven years the Indians successfully defied every effort to subdue them, retreating into the fastnesses of the Everglades when closely pressed. Osceola, chieftain of the Seminoles, having been captured by treachery, the war ended in 1842. The remnant of the Indians were removed beyond the Mississippi, and in three years after their expulsion (1845) Florida was admitted into the Union as a State.

On the 10th January 1861, Florida, by a convention assembled on the 3d, seceded from the Union. Fort Marion and the arsenals at St Augustine and Chattahoochee were seized on the 7th, the forts and dockyards at Pensacola on the 12th, except Fort Pickens, on Santa Rosa island, which was held by the United States forces. Not being within the line of great military operations, the conflicts between the Federal and Confederate forces were of minor importance. Fernandina, Jacksonville, and St Augustine fell into the hands of the national forces early in 1862. Pensacola was reoccupied by them the same year. In April 1865 President Johnson, by a proclamation, declared the restrictions on commercial intercourse with Florida removed; in July William Marvin was named provisional governor. A State convention assembled in October at Tallahassee which repealed the ordinance of

secession. Civil government was practically resumed the following year by the election of State officers and a legislature. A subsequent State convention met at Tallahassee, January 20, 1868, to form a new constitution, which was ratified by the people in May, a legislature and State officers being chosen at the same election. The State having complied with the enactments of Congress relative to reconstruction resumed its place in the Union. In 1876 the election of Rutherford B. Hayes, republican, as president of the United States, over Samuel J. Tilden, democrat, was determined by the electoral votes of Florida and Louisiana, which by a decision of the extraordinary commission created by Congress were counted for the former.

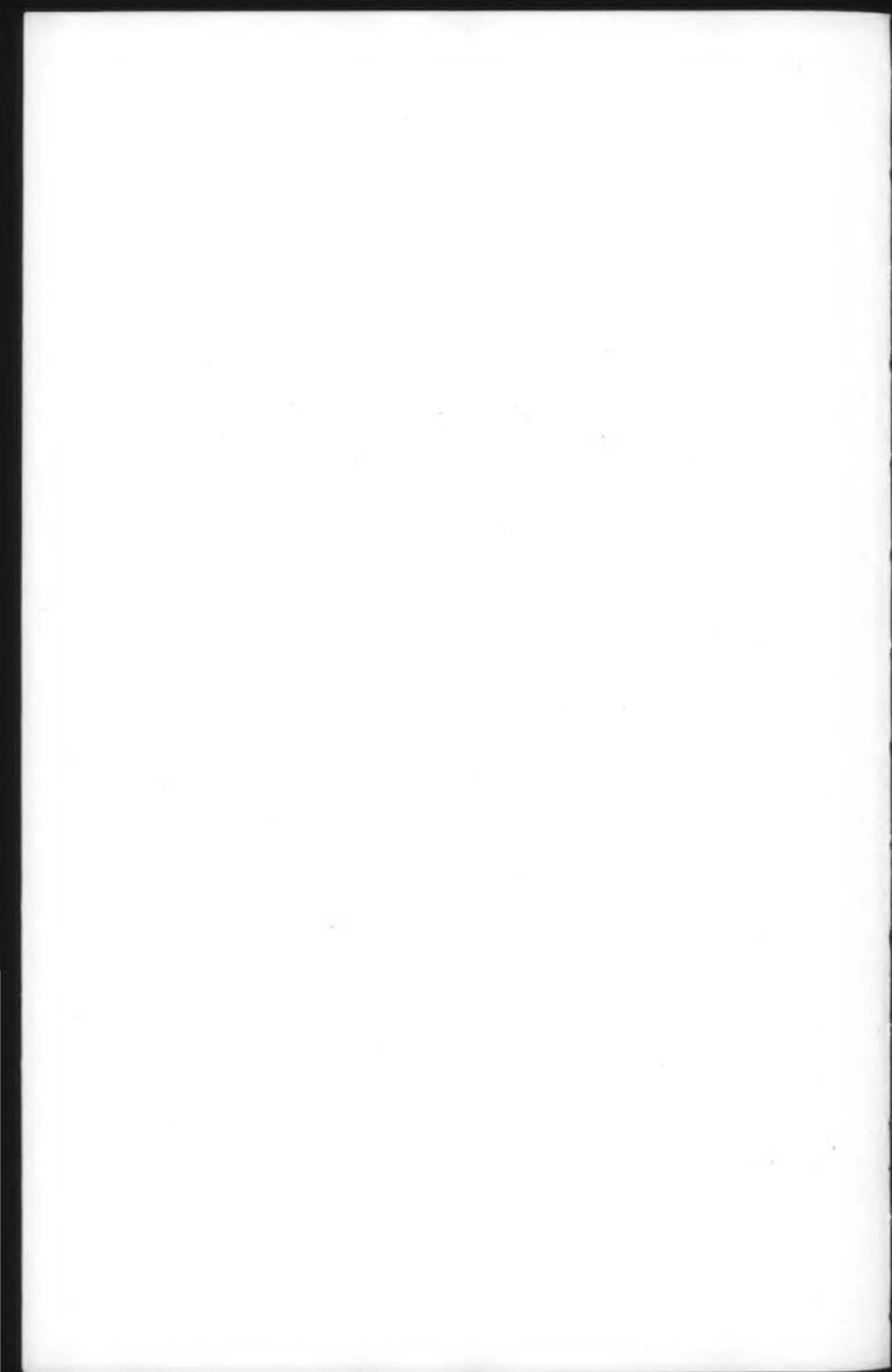


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